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Raborn at CIA'S Helm

THE popular idea is that the head of the Central Intelligence Agency should be a super James Bond, directing cloak and dagger operations around the world.

The truth is, of course, that the CIA is a vast, sprawling factory-type operation. It is mainly in the business of refining the raw materials of information and rumor into factual reports on which policy decisions can be made. As boss it needs an organizer rather than a master spy.

That is one good reason for applauding the choice of retired Vice Admiral William F. Raborn Jr. to succeed John A. McCone as chief of

the CIA. In his long career, Admiral Raborn repeatedly has demonstrated superior executive and organizing skill, as well as a cool head under fire.

His best known accomplishment was as director of the special Navy task force which created the Polaris submarine missile, one of the most successful weapon developments in the nation's history.

As a onetime gunnery officer and naval flier as well as a missile expert, he also brings to his new job broad knowledge of military hardware. That is an important asset in a man whose responsibility is to know who is aiming what weapons at whom — and where and why.